

Inventors and Inventions

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Who Invented the Popsicle?



Bettmann/Corbis

A Tasty Invention

Did you know that Popsicles were once called Epsicles? They were named after Frank Epperson. He invented them by accident in 1905 at the age of 11. One night, he left a drink outside in the cold. The drink had a stirring stick in it. The next day, he saw that the drink had frozen around the stick. Epperson began selling his "Epsicles" in 1923. At that time, they came in seven flavors.

Ideas That Pop

Inventing is not just for adults. Kids from across the country recently showed off their great ideas. They took part in a contest to create a new use for Bubble Wrap. Bubble Wrap is a packing material that has air-filled plastic bubbles. It is used to protect objects that are breakable.

Andy Boler, age 10, from Texas, used Bubble Wrap to make a cover for plants. It protects plants from the cold. "I like building things that could help people," he says.

Other inventions in the contest included a kite-making kit and a wrist cushion. Some of the kids' inventions may be turned into real products.

"We have very few rules," says a contest spokesperson. "One of the main goals is to get young students thinking."



Courtesy of Weber Shandwick

Here is Andy Boler with his Bubble Wrap invention.

A New Tail

Dolphin Rescue

Scientists make a new tail for a dolphin.

Meet Winter. Winter is a 4-year-old dolphin. She lives at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium in Clearwater, Florida. Unlike other dolphins, Winter has a **prosthetic** tail that was made just for her. A prosthetic body part is a fake part that is used in place of a real one.



AP Images

Dolphins move their tails up and down to swim. Winter had to swim side to side. Now that she has a new tail, she can swim as other dolphins do.

Why did Winter need a new tail? In 2005, she got caught in a **crab trapline** and needed to be rescued. A crab trapline is a cord used to lift a crab trap out of the ocean. The cord damaged Winter's tail and made it fall off. She was only 3 months old. Many people thought she would not survive. Dolphins need to move their tails up and down to swim.



Age fotostock/SuperStock

A crab trap is used to catch crabs in the ocean. The traps can be a danger to dolphins and other ocean animals.

Making a New Tail

Scientist Kevin Carroll heard about Winter. He makes prosthetic parts for humans. "I thought to myself, 'That poor dolphin,' " says Carroll. "Then I thought, 'That's what we do. We replace missing body parts. Why not a dolphin?' "



AP Images

Winter plays with another dolphin at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Carroll and his team tried many ideas. Finally, they made a tail that worked. It is made of a special material that works well with Winter's sensitive skin. The tail is placed over a gel-like material that helps hold it in place. The new tail lets Winter move quickly through the water. She is now able to swim like a dolphin again!



Clearwater Marine Aquarium

Steps to Inventing

Kids can be inventors too! Follow the steps below to help you get started.

(1) Identify a problem.

Think about things that you need or things that could be made better.

(2) Brainstorm ideas.

List as many ideas as you can to solve the problem. Don't worry if the idea seems silly at the time. Write down everything that pops into your head.

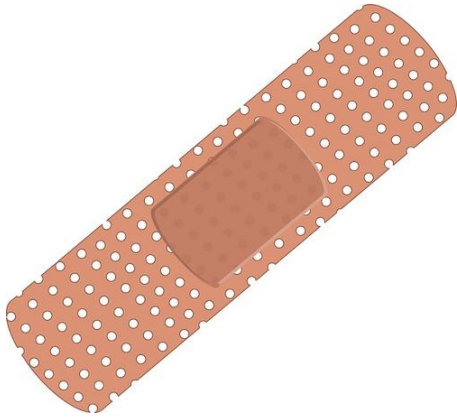
(3) Find the best solution.

Choose the idea that sounds as though it would solve the problem the best. You may have to try many ideas before you find one that works.

(4) Create an invention and name it.

The next great invention might be one of your ideas!

Great Ideas!



bandaid



chocolate chip cookies



traffic light

Amazing Inventions

Learn about some bright ideas.

What would life be like without **inventions**? It's hard to imagine. An invention is a new thing or idea. It can change the way people live. Some inventions solve problems and make life easier. Other inventions make life more fun (or tastier!). Read about some great inventions.

An Idea That Stuck

The next time you stick on a Band-Aid, you can thank Earle Dickson. He invented the ready-made bandage in 1920. He wanted to help his wife who often cut her fingers while cooking.

At the time, people had to cut pieces of gauze and tape to make bandages. They were hard to use. Dickson's simple idea was a big success. Today, ready-made bandages come in many shapes, sizes, and colors.

A Tasty Invention

Did you know that chocolate chip cookies were a mistake? Ruth Graves Wakefield created them in the 1930s. She was mixing a batch of chocolate cookies and was out of baking chocolate. She decided to chop up a bar of semisweet chocolate instead. When the cookies were done, the pieces of chocolate had not melted! They had kept their chip form in each cookie.

Safety First

Before the 1920s, people often got into traffic accidents. One day, Garrett Morgan saw a bad accident between a car and a horse-drawn carriage. He decided to solve the problem by inventing a traffic signal. It was a pole with signs saying when to stop and go. Today's red, yellow, and green traffic lights are based on Morgan's idea.

Inventions That Changed Our World



What Would We Do Without... ?

bubble gum

invented in 1906 by Frank Henry Fleer

Silly Putty

invented in 1943 by James Wright

basketball

invented in 1891 by James Naismith

Velcro

invented in 1948 by George de Mestral

People have been inventing things for years. Paper was invented about 2,000 years ago. The wheel was invented more than 5,000 years ago. What would life be like without paper to write on or bikes to ride? Those inventions have made life easier.

Airplane

The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in December 1903. That makes 2003 the 100th anniversary! Before the airplane was invented, most people traveled by cars, boats, and trains. Today, airplanes help people travel faster. How do airplanes help you?

Telephone

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. Before the telephone was invented, people kept in touch by writing letters or talking in person. Today, the telephone makes it easier for people to talk to one another. How do telephones help you?

Automobile

The first four-wheeled gas-powered car was invented by Karl Benz in 1891. Before people had cars, they couldn't travel easily. They walked or rode horses for short trips. They took trains or boats for long trips. Today, cars are one of the main ways people travel. How do cars help you?

Computer

People worked for years to make the first computer. It was built in 1946. The first computer was called ENIAC. Today, computers are an important part of many people's lives. People use computers as tools to write, get information, and much more. How do computers help you?